

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously Presented): A telephone call restriction apparatus for connection to a telephone line, comprising:

a controller having memory for storing call restriction data and at least one call restriction procedure in a programming mode and for applying said call restriction procedures to said call restriction data in a call restriction mode, said call restriction data comprising a list of telephone numbers;

a transceiver having conductors for receiving tone signals from and sending tone signals to the telephone line and conductors for sending digital signals to and receiving digital signals from said controller,

wherein, when said controller is in said programming mode, said controller is programmed to receive from said transceiver a first set of digital signals representing call restriction data and a second set of digital signals representing said call restriction procedures, and further, wherein, when said controller is in said call restriction mode, said controller is programmed to determine whether a call inhibition condition exists by comparing a third set of digital signals representing a dialed telephone number received from said transceiver with said stored call restriction data and, if said dialed telephone number matches a telephone number in said list, determining that a call inhibition condition exists and then causing an

interference on said telephone line some time after the determination that a call inhibition condition exists.

2. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as recited in claim 26, wherein said transceiver sends a tone signal to the telephone line in response to said call inhibition condition.

3. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as recited in claim 2, further comprising a circuit that increases the intensity of said tone signal on said the telephone line in response to said call inhibition condition.

4. (Original): The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said transceiver comprises a DTMF transceiver.

5. (Original): The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said memory is nonvolatile.

6. (Currently Amended): The apparatus as recited in claim 1, further comprising a circuit for supplying power from the telephone line to said controller and to said transceiver only when a telephone off hook condition is detected on the telephone line.

7. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as recited in claim 26, further comprising a circuit for maintaining the interference on said telephone line until a telephone on hook condition of sufficient duration is detected.

8. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as recited in claim 26, wherein the controller ceases the interference in response to detection of an on-hook condition and

further, wherein a circuit resumes the interference on said telephone line following a telephone on hook condition of insufficient duration.

9. (Original): The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said controller comprises a microcontroller chip.

10. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said controller is further programmed to change its mode of operation from said call restriction mode to said programming mode in response to receipt of digital signals representing a predetermined authorization code from said transceiver.

11. (Canceled).

12. (Currently Amended): A method for programming a call restriction device connected to a telephone line at a location between a telephone and an exchange, comprising the following steps:

establishing a connection between a the telephone and a remote computer having an access number that is accessible via the telephone line and through a public telephone switching network;

placing the call restriction device in a mode wherein the call restriction device is programmable;

sending signals representing call restriction data and call restriction procedures from the telephone ~~onto the telephone line~~ to the remote computer;

sending signals representing code for programming the call restriction device to restrict calls in accordance with said call restriction data and said call restriction procedures from the remote computer ~~onto the telephone line~~ to the call restriction device; and

loading the programming code into a memory in the call restriction device so that the call restriction device, when in a call inhibition mode, will restrict calls on the telephone line in accordance with said call restriction data and said call restriction procedures.

13. (Previously Presented): The method as recited in claim 12, further comprising the step of sending signals representing an authorization code from the telephone onto the telephone line prior to sending said signals representing call restriction data and said call restriction procedures.

14. (Previously Presented): The method as recited in claim 12, further comprising the step of sending a voice prompt from the remote computer onto the telephone line, said voice prompt requesting input of call restriction data and call restriction procedures.

15. (Original): The method as recited in claim 13, further comprising the step of sending a voice prompt from the remote computer onto telephone line, said voice prompt requesting input of said authorization code.

16. (Previously Presented): A system comprising:

a telephone;

a telephone line connecting said telephone to a exchange;

a call restriction device connected to said telephone line at a location between said telephone and said exchange and programmed to restrict calls on said telephone line in a call inhibition mode and to accept call restriction data and call restriction procedures in a programming mode; and

an interactive voice response system having an access number that is accessible via a public telephone switching network, wherein said interactive voice response system is programmed to perform the following steps:

 sending a voice message requesting input of call restriction data and said call restriction procedures while connected to said telephone line;

 recognizing signals representing call restriction data and said call restriction procedures returned via said telephone line following sending of said voice message requesting input of call restriction data and call restriction procedures; and

 sending signals representing said call restriction data and said call restriction procedures while connected to said telephone line.

17. (Previously Presented): The system as recited in claim 16, wherein said interactive voice response system is further programmed to perform the following steps:

 sending a voice message requesting input of an authorization code while connected to said telephone line;

 recognizing signals representing an authorization code returned via said telephone line following sending of said voice message requesting input of an authorization code; and

sending signals representing said authorization code while connected to said telephone line,

wherein said voice message requesting input of call restriction data and said call restriction procedures is sent by said interactive voice response system only after detection of a predetermined signal indicating said authorization code is valid transmitted by said call restriction device.

18. (Original): The system as recited in claim 17, wherein said call restriction device is programmed to perform the following steps:

validating said authorization code sent by said interactive voice response system; and

changing modes from a call inhibition mode to a programming mode and sending said predetermined signal to said telephone line after validation of said authorization code.

19. (Previously Presented): A method for programming a call restriction device connected to a telephone line, comprising the following steps:

establishing a connection between a computer and a destination station via the telephone line;

placing the call restriction device in a mode wherein the call restriction device is programmable;

inputting call restriction data and data representing call restriction procedures into the computer;

sending signals representing the inputted call restriction data and call restriction procedures from the computer onto the telephone line; and

storing said call restriction data and said call restriction procedures in the call restriction device so that the call restriction device will operate in a call inhibition mode in accordance with said stored call restriction data and said call restriction procedures.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended): A telephone call restriction system comprising:

a telephone;

a telephone line connecting said telephone to a exchange;

a call restrictor connected to said telephone line at a location between said telephone and said exchange; and

a remote computer having an access number that is accessible through a public telephone switching network, said remote computer being communicative with said telephone and said call restrictor via said telephone line when a connection is established, said computer being programmed to automatically program said call restrictor based on call restrictions input via said telephone.

22. (Previously Presented): The system as recited in claim 21, wherein said remote computer is an interactive voice response system.

23. (Original): The system as recited in claim 21, wherein said call restrictor comprises:

a controller programmed to transmit first and second control signals in response to detection of a call inhibition condition;

a DTMF transceiver having a port for outputting DTMF signals in response to receipt of said first control signal from said controller; and

a circuit that increases the amplitude of the DTMF signals output from said port of said DTMF transceiver signals in response to receipt of said second control signal from said controller.

24. (Canceled).

25. (Original): A telephone call restrictor programmed with call restrictions and having a programming mode and a call restriction mode, comprising:

a controller that is programmable in said programming mode and that detects call inhibition conditions as a function of said call restrictions in said call restriction mode;

a DTMF transceiver having a port for outputting DTMF signals in both said programming mode and said call inhibition mode; and

a circuit that increases the amplitude of the DTMF signals output from said port of said DTMF transceiver signals, said circuit being active when said controller has detected a call inhibition condition and being inactive at other times.

26. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said controller is further programmed to cause said interference on said telephone line after a call to the dialed telephone number has been connected for a predetermined time duration.

27. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said memory also stores call restriction exception data comprising a list of exception telephone numbers, and said controller is further programmed to determine whether said dialed telephone number is a call restriction exception by comparing said dialed telephone number to said exception telephone numbers and, if said dialed telephone number matches an exception telephone number, said controller is further programmed to not cause an interference on said telephone line.